

SOCIAL RELATIONS

221

parents would remind her that death might take them and she would be alone in the world. "Children are supposed to obey; so she married him even if she did not like him." Yet she might finally refuse to go when the groom's mother came to fetch her. 584

When the youth told his parents that he had spent the night with the girl, his mother went for her. But before leaving, she sent word throughout the village that her son had been married. Then all the men and sometimes women gathered at his home to await the arrival of the girl. As soon as she arrived, she performed the stereotyped task of providing a meal for them. 585

When a girl married, she was supposed to know all about cooking and grinding wheat. The latter was looked on as the most onerous task that could be set a young girl. The man's parents gave her a big basket of wheat to grind as soon as she arrived. Sometimes she would finish grinding the whole of it, but some could do no more than half. These would attempt to hide the underground grain in a hole beneath the end of the metate. Sometimes the girl would be so ashamed of her failure that she would run off home. Then others thought the parents mean to have given her so hard a task. [581]

They also made her fetch a large vessel of water, perhaps from quite a distance. A girl friend might secretly help her; filling the pot after the bride had lifted it to her head. Sometimes she would leave the vessel on the river bank and run home.

Girls who could not perform these minimum accomplishments of any proper housewife, grinding quickly and well, and keeping an adequate supply of water on hand, were not wanted. Such a girl was permanently rejected by her intended husband's family. But when someone else wanted to marry her, they would bring up this defect in her character. 581

Nothing in the way of payment, not even gifts, was made to the girl's parents. But the man's parents made presents of such things as shawls to the girl before she married. A girl might be receiving gifts from one family when another selected her for 584

⁵⁷ There is no ceremonial washing of the couple as among the Navaho and Havasupai (cf. Spier, *Havasupai Ethnography*, p. 326). [171]

222 YUMAN TRIBES OF THE GILA RIVER

584 their son to marry. Then the first family would say nothing whatever of their gifts: this was quite within her rights.

591 The young couple took up their residence in the home of the groom's parents. In fact some households became quite large when several sons brought home their wives. It was sometimes convenient for them to build a house of their own at once: they always did so following the birth of their second child. Their house might be located anywhere in the village, not of necessity beside the husband's former home. Since the farm lands, which [428] were inherited, were located at a distance from the village and house sites were not heritable property, there was no compulsion in the forms of inheritance to do so.⁵⁸

It was thought unnatural for a man to live with his wife's family, unless his help was really needed there. They believed he must be jealous that he kept his wife from his family or his erstwhile companions who still frequented his former home.

428 It was a saying that a younger son or daughter would stay at home with their
591 parents. Such a daughter would be joined by her husband. The older sons brought their wives home, but went off later to establish homes of their own. The older daughters marry elsewhere. Then the youngest at home inherited (Kutox). [This was obviously a matter of chance rather than any formalized junior inheritance.]

553 A new social configuration settled about the couple. From
[585] this time forward, the bride was regularly called by the name of her sib by the husband's family, especially its women members. Similarly, the groom was derisively nicknamed by his wife's relatives. They called him ugly like an animal or referred to some discreditable habit. The invention of the nickname was uniformly credited to his mother-in-law, although she may not have been [606] its originator at all. A man was expected to treat his mother-in-law just like his wife. There was no mother-in-law taboo, nor one between father- and daughter-in-law. Brothers-in-law considered themselves close relatives and made it a point to help each other. [607] Between brothers- and sisters-in-law a certain amount of licence was permissible: they might say anything to each other, even to obscenity, without offense.

⁵⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 228.